



The

Huddle

Cultivating culture through **innovation** *and* **efficiencies**

NEBRASKA

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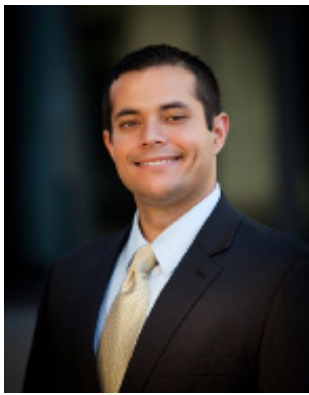
A Moment with a Master Black Belt...

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A Year of Process Improvement Under Our Belts

by Matthew Singh, Director of Operational Excellence



One year can be a long time to some to translate it to real life, it is two semesters for a college student, 1-2 shoe sizes of growth for those of us with

little ones, and 12-13 regular season Husker football games. The Center for Operational Excellence (COE) is celebrating its one year anniversary of the graduation of its first cohort of Green Belts and thought you might enjoy hearing about some of the progress they have made over the last 12 months. Cohort 1 consisted of candidates from Department of Administrative Services, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Correctional Services, and Department of Roads. These were the first state agencies to raise their hands and ask for process improvement coordinators. Since then, we now have Process Improvement Coordinators in Department of Banking and Finance, Department of Insurance, Department of Labor, Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Natural Resources, Nebraska State Patrol, Department of Agriculture, Nebraska Department of Veteran Affairs, Department of Revenue, Parole Board, Fire Marshal, Nebraska Commission on Criminal Justice, and Department

of Motor Vehicles. We are currently looking at PICs for non-codes, Constitutional Entities, and the Legislature as well. In the last several months, your team members have identified and either executed or are working on over 160 process improvement projects focused on making our agencies more effective, efficient, and customer focused by saving significant amounts of payroll hours that can be redirected to other activities, eliminating process bottlenecks, and eliminating some important backlogs.

Additionally, the COE has partnered with the Cabinet Members/Directors of the State to certify over 12,000 white belts, over 1,200 yellow belts, 15 Green Belts, and 2 executive Green Belts. We are currently providing our certification and training services to other public entities including Nebraska colleges and cities. We could go on about what has been accomplished, but I think the most telling sign of our accomplishments is what we have managed to help facilitate with the cultural changes. Every morning I receive emails from team members like you who have read the recent Huddle or participated in a kaizen event/project and want to learn more about how to help the state. I go to meetings and when recognized as "the process improvement guy," I have state team members at all levels begin to tell me about an improvement they made in their work areas or on their teams. It is a rewarding and motivating experience. Seeing and hearing each of you take action to make



Chris Gadeken, Process Improvement Coordinator (PIC) with Department of Corrections addresses the media at the October 30th press conference. Gadeken stressed the importance of the role of a PIC and why he loves what he does. "I love that it Customer focused. No matter what process we are working on, we always identify our internal and external customers first. We always make improvement that are from the customers perspective."

Nebraska government a better place is a reminder to me of why I love the Midwest. You readers were thinking and doing these types of things before the first cohort of Green Belts was certified a year ago, but hopefully now you see you have more support and structure to do the process improvement that you have been thinking about for a while. The spirit of process improvement is not new to Nebraska, and now we can use the COE network of White, Yellow, Green Belts and Executive Green Belts to give some structure and horse power to those initiatives on your mind. Here is to another successful 12 months!

Spreading Statewide: Process Improvement through Remote Huddles

by Katie Maschmann, Process Improvement Coordinator II, Department of Health and Human Services



Last quarter we met two yellow belts and their teams. Both

of these teams were located in Lincoln; however, our process improvement initiatives extend far beyond just Lincoln. This includes project teams incorporating staff from all areas, as well as training yellow belts across the state. In September and October, members of the COE team will be traveling to Grand Island, North Platte and Scottsbluff for yellow belt training. They will be training team members from State Patrol, Department of Labor, Department of Health and Human Services, and Department of Administrative Services. Without green belts located in western Nebraska, this was the best way to include these team members in the yellow belt training. After the training, green belts will utilize remote huddle methods to mentor and support these new yellow belts and monitor their team's progress. Process improvement is not just a Lincoln or Omaha thing; it spans the entire State of Nebraska. We want to



For Sarah's team the daily huddle brought the team closer despite the large geographical distance between them. Pictured from left to right: (Front row) Sarah Zarek, Shirl Kratochvil, Nancy Lyne, Jada Venezie, and Ashley Arndt (Back row) Darrin Wyatt, Marilyn Kudera, Janet Mulligan, Nancy Schmitz, Marti O'Hara, Nicole Egan, and Brenda Bender

include everyone on this journey! We wanted to show you what some amazing yellow belts are already doing across the state.

Meet Shirl Kratochvil and her team!

(Team Members: Sarah Zarek, Shirl Kratochvil, Nancy Lyne, Jada Venezie, Ashley Arndt, Darrin Wyatt, Marilyn Kudera, Janet Mulligan, Nancy Schmitz, Marti O'Hara, Nicole Egan, and Brenda Bender)

Their goals are:

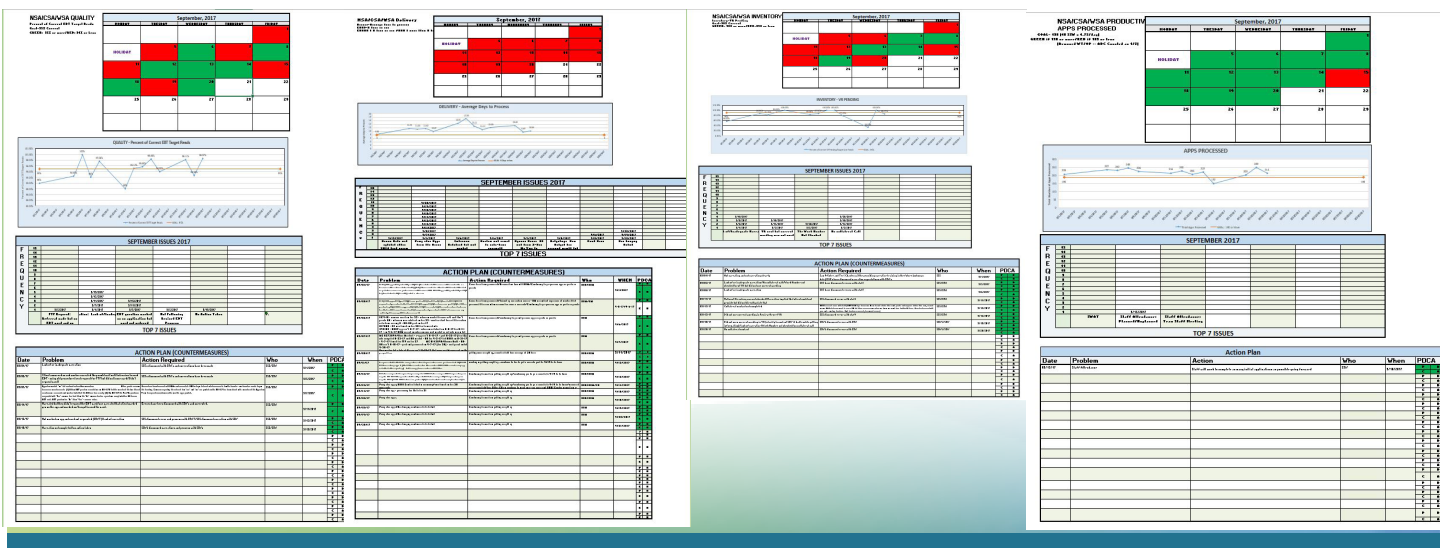
Quality – Average of 5 days or less from interview to processed applications; and 95% of targeted reads for Electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card processes are correct.

Delivery – Average of 8 days or less to process an application.

Inventory – 90% of targeted reads for pending verification requests are correct.

Productivity – 190 applications processed per day, and 152 work tasks completed per day.

Shirl is an Economic Assistance Service Delivery Administrator for the Division of Children and Family Services within the Department of Health and Human Services. Her team administers and manages eligibility for Economic Assistance programs, including helping clients with applying for several programs providing financial assistance and services. Shirl and her team are located from Scottsbluff to Dakota City to Grand Island. Since Shirl's team is



located all across the state, she had to be creative when it came to implementing a QDIP board and huddle. This is why she created an electronic QDIP board and utilizes Skype in order to huddle with her team on a daily basis.

When starting the QDIP board and huddles, Shirl was excited. However, she was also nervous as she was not quite sure how to set it up. She also wanted to assure her team how helpful these huddles would be and that they were not just another chore. Shirl noted that some team members readily jumped in and could see the benefit, while some struggled a little while and then jumped.

Sarah Zarek, a unit manager, shared her experience. "I was excited to attend a daily huddle. I felt it would be a good way to improve communication. At my prior employment, we had a daily huddle so I knew the benefits of the huddle. It was a little overwhelming at first trying to determine the metrics we wanted to track, but once we narrowed down what we wanted to focus on, it went smoothly."

The team agreed to use Skype, as they were a new team and spread around the state. Shirl admitted it took her and her team a while to gain clear understanding of what would be beneficial to track, as well as easy to gather each day. Now the team has ideas "on hold" of things they want to work on/track and improve upon. Each time they hit their goals consistently, they change out the metric for another one to track. However, they will still keep an eye on all past metrics to ensure there is no backsliding.

While the team has had great success in improving measures, they feel that the biggest impact has been team unity and improved communication. Jada Venezie, a supervisor, expanded on this. "I feel that it has brought the team closer. We have such a large geographical distance between us; that with the daily Skype meeting, it has fostered new

relationships and brought the team to truly function better. It gives everyone a space to see a 'snapshot' of yesterday and discuss challenges for today. I see lots of mentoring, sharing and growing as a team. I feel this has helped everyone become a better leader, have a better idea of what needs addressed, and work on strategies to address those needs." When asked what advice they would give to other teams starting a QDIP board and huddle, Shirl, Sarah, and Jada's responses were all of the same. "Just do it!"

Meet Bernie Hansen and her team!

(Team Members: Bernie Hansen, David Rangeloff, and Colleen Jensen)

Their goals are:

Quality – 90% of Case Management Enrollments will have all required eligibility documentation and activities entered in NEworks and ECM within 1 business day of enrollment.

Delivery – 90% of Program Referrals will be contacted within 2 business days.

Inventory – 90% of Pending Referrals will be followed-up on within 3 business days from original receipt of referral.

Productivity – 3 Individuals from Targeted Populations will be provided information about available career services and program eligibility.

Bernie is an employment services manager for the Department of Labor. The team is located at the Career Center in Columbus. They assist employers and job seekers with employment and training needs. For employers, they promote on-the-job trainings, apprenticeships, worker training grants, as well as promoting the benefits of hiring veterans. For job seekers, they provide employment services such as resume assistance and mock interviews; as well as federal funds for training individuals in occupations that are high wage,



For Bernie's team the daily huddle helps them see where their daily work fits into the broader picture. Pictured from left to right: Bernie Hansen, David Rangeloff, and Colleen Jensen

high demand and high skill. Veterans are their priority of service. They provide intensive case management services solely to those veterans with significant barriers to employment. They also provide a youth program to assist individuals with significant barriers to employment, as well as offer funds for low income and displaced workers impacted by layoffs and closures.

When starting the QDIP board and huddles, Bernie admits that the team was a bit apprehensive because they already had weekly staff meetings to discuss daily events and projects. Since starting the huddles, the team has come to learn the value of the QDIP board. They enjoy the visual depiction of their metrics, which leads to open discussion and creative problem solving.

Bernie expanded on the benefits of the QDIP board and huddle. "The team now understands how the daily huddles impact team work. The QDIP board is a constant reminder of where the focus needs to be in order to continuously improve. It also serves as a motivator when the metrics are not met, but conversely it serves as positive reinforcement when the team is meeting the goals for which they take pride."

David Rangeloff, a workforce coordinator for veterans programs, has also seen a change in dynamic with the team and the programs they manage."

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Spreading Statewide: Process Improvement through Remote Huddles

Now that we have implemented the huddle and QDIP for the past several months, I feel it has brought a broader scope to the veterans program in the Columbus Career Center. Now, all members of the team can see both the ideas of targeting veterans for services and the outcome."

The team does not always work directly with veterans that have significant barriers to employment, so the QDIP board serves as a constant reminder that all veterans are a priority of service. This has helped the team be more deliberate in their work and focused on brainstorming outreach activities for the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program. One

action plan, which resulted from several huddles, includes hosting a collaborative event on Manufacturing Day. The event is October 6, 2017, and will specifically target this region's veteran population to promote careers in manufacturing.

While the team has had several ah-ha moments, Bernie shared that one of biggest outcomes has been the impact on their partners. "The Columbus Career Center often hosts job fairs for regional employers, as well as partner meetings and events in our office. Human Resources and other agency representatives constantly ask about the QDIP, why it is there, what it means, how it

works and the benefits of having it. They walk away impressed and the conversation continues amongst themselves."

David also had some great advice for teams starting a new QDIP board and huddle. "Do not be afraid of change or creating a need for change within a specific program."

Overall, the team has really seen the QDIP board and huddles accelerate understanding and alignment for a more efficient and effective state agency. They now have a better understanding of how their daily work fits into the bigger picture.

Jesse's Tool Time: E-QDIP Brings Huddles Anywhere

by Jesse Cushman, Process Improvement Coordinator II, Department of Health and Human Services

In previous editions, we have talked about the various LSS tools. In this issue, we tackle the Electronic QDIP board.

A Brief History

At the State of Nebraska, the daily management huddles continue to grow, and QDIP boards have been deployed throughout the various departments. One exciting thing that has come from this is the creation of virtual huddles. These E-QDIP boards function similarly to their paper counterparts. They can be attended by staff who work remotely or in different offices from teammates and supervisors.

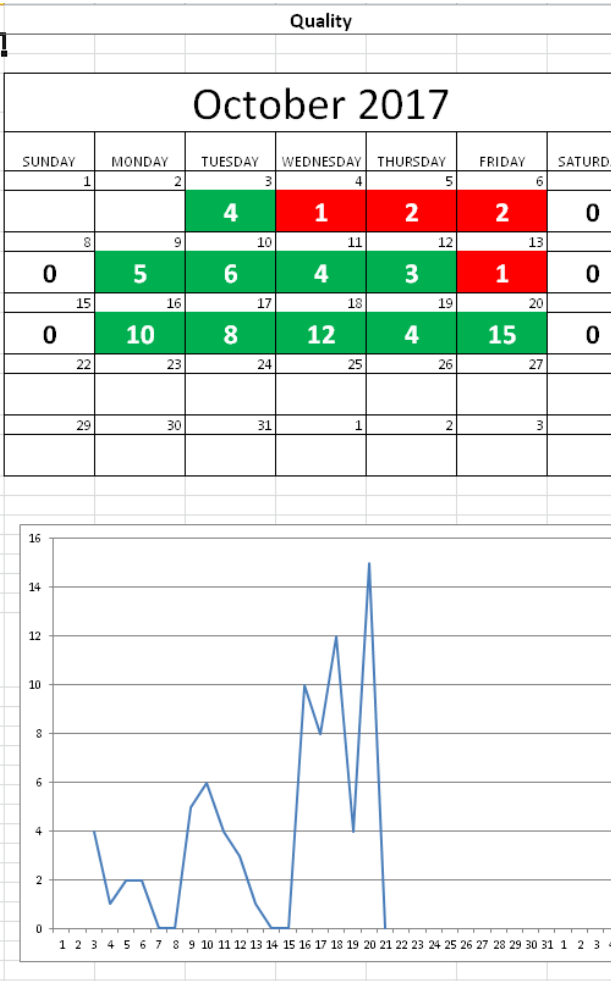
What is an E-QDIP Board

The E-QDIP board is simply an electronic version of the standard QDIP board but in an excel format. There are different ways for this to be communicated and shared daily. Some of the most common ways are via Skype/Lync. Instant messengers such as Skype and Lync allow the meeting moderator to share their screen with co-workers and meeting participants. The format and use of the board is very similar to the paper

version. There are tabs for each metric set for example in the Quality tab there will be a calendar, run chart, issues pareto chart, and an action item section. In each tab, the data is entered and issues are discussed.

How is it Used

Again, like the paperboards, the QDIP board is used to track your daily (sometimes weekly) metrics and provides a point of focus for your team. The benefit of the E-QDIP board is that it brings together members of a team who are not able to join a paper QDIP. Virtual huddles are another tool to help bring all team members together to meet the daily management objectives for all state employees. If you are interested in using E-QDIPs and virtual huddles, contact your Certified Lean Six Sigma Green Belt to see if it is right for you.



Conversations with a Green Belt: Introducing Chris Gadeken

by Seth Fager, Process Improvement Coordinator II, Department of Health and Human Services



This month's featured Green Belt is Chris Gadeken. In January of this year, Chris

is all about the people involved. That is what makes Lean Six Sigma unique and successful. By empowering the people involved we can utilize each person's individual talents.



began his role as a Process Improvement Coordinator with the Nebraska Department of Corrections. After completing the required training, written test, and two required Green Belt projects, Chris received his Green Belt Certification in April. Prior to working at the Nebraska Department of Corrections, Chris was employed as the Operations Managers of a local health care company.

Hobbies and life outside of work:

Chris was born and raised in Lincoln, but through schooling and a general sense of adventure, he has had the opportunity to travel and live in a few different places such as Guatemala and Mali West Africa. There he was involved with efforts in community development and sustainable agriculture. When it comes to hobbies, Chris has a wide range of activities that he partakes in. This includes wood working, reading, kayaking, camping, rock climbing, and pretty much anything else outdoors or just spending time with his wife.

What do you enjoy most about Lean Six Sigma?

Lean Six Sigma

Describe two current projects you have completed and why they were chosen.

A recent project I worked on was for Medication Cards at the Nebraska Correctional Center for Women (NCCW). We have a Pharmacy that distributes medication to all of our facilities throughout Nebraska. We were able to change some of the processes to greatly decrease the amount of time it takes for them to produce and package medication. The process was chosen to help alleviate process burden, which was very reliant on a single piece of machinery that left them little to no room for error. The new process allows them to package a 30-day supply of medication instead of packaging a one day supply each and every day.

In another project, we looked at the hiring and screening process between posting a position and contacting the applicant for interviews. To improve this process, supplemental questions on the application were implemented to



assist in screening the applicants. This resulted in time savings and consistency in screening applicants. The team was also able to reduce the complexity of approvals that were needed for re-hire reviews. All in all, the process was able to go from 40 to 21 steps and decrease the lead time from 36 days to 14.

Advice you would like to share about process improvement?

Part of process improvement is sharing your ideas on what can be done more efficiently. The best process improvement ideas typically come from the staff who are directly involved in the process. When involved in a process improvement event, be willing to share your ideas, as well as being receptive to others' ideas. At times, change can be difficult, but why not be part of the change that can make the process better for yourself and the others who you work alongside.



DMV Reaches Finish Line on Regulation Change

by Heather Behl, Process Improvement Coordinator II, Department of Correctional Services

Imagine you are competing in a race and you are on the starting line. The whistle blows and you run with all you have to the finish line. The finish line is easy to see and you race across the line first. You and everyone else can see the success you made by simply looking at the surroundings. In government, success is not always easy to see and the finish line, for most achievements, is not visible. The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the Department of Transportation (DOT) shared this feeling with the Insurance Verification Process because it was not easy to see what success looked like. They worked on a process improvement project and got to the ultimate goal - Regulation Change.

The Insurance Verification Process was as daunting as it sounds, with over 50 steps inside the process. You might think that 50 steps doesn't seem like a lot, but those 50 steps were processing a single form, the SR-21L, through both the DMV and DOT. To give a little background, the form was generated after a car accident happened and the at-fault drivers had to provide proof of insurance. The form they generated was the SR-21L. This form was processed through the DOT and then ultimately given to the DMV. The DMV processed it through their system and then sent it to insurance companies to see if the at-fault driver had insurance. Once returned, the DMV could start the process to potentially suspend the license of the at-fault driver. To give you some perspective, the DMV sent insurance companies 30,831 SR-21Ls and of those only .22% were actionable. With such a low percentage of actionable items it was hard for the DMV and DOT to see the goal at the end of this process.

The DMV and DOT gathered together to have a process improvement



Teammates from Department of Motor Vehicles and Department of Transportation came together to improve the Insurance Verification Process creating greater efficiencies for both agencies. Pictured from right to left: (Back Row) Sean Owings, Ryan Huff, Carole Gasper, Linda Swope, Lisa Wolfe, Joan Johnson and (Front Row) Linsey Sousek, Kelly Clements, Shirley Danahy, Kathy Van Brocklin, Jean Brill, Sue Carlborn, Sharon Kruse and Erinn Criner.

Kaizen, that they later called "SORT NO MORE!" It was at this Kaizen that the team, made up of experts of the process and outside perspectives, started to see all the changes that needed to be made in order for this process to have a visible goal. Carole Gasper, Accident Records Supervisor for DOT recollected that: "It was a really great Kaizen because it made us look in-depth at how we process the tabs [SR-21Ls] and what we were really getting back in return." It was through this Kaizen that the group decided that state statute would need to be changed to really improve the process. State statute required the DMV to process the SR-21L form to the insurance companies. Through this event, the team was finally able to see the finish line, though it was in the distance.

The DMV and DOT put in a lot of effort and on August 24th, 2017, their hard work paid off with their revised state statute taking effect. The revision eliminates the entire process. "It was great to see that we could look at a process, gather the data to see that we don't need to do this process, and eliminate it. It is a win for everyone," said Joan Johnson, Administrative Assistant in Financial Responsi-

bility for the DMV, when asked about how she felt about the regulation change. Uninsured drivers are still getting taken off of the road through more effective processes than the Insurance Verification Process. The team members all agree that it was a lot of work, but it was well worth the effort.

Together, the DMV and DOT were able to visualize the finish line and sprint toward change. Carole Gasper, when asked what advice she would give to people on project teams said, "You really need to think about what you do in-depth and that it is hard in the beginning, but it is worth it once you see the changes you can make as an agency." Many of you know of the processes that need to be changed to make a more effective and efficient government and Joan Johnson has one more piece of advice "Change can happen." It only takes one suggestion to start the race to success and one voice can make that finish line visible.



HELP US GROW NEBRASKA

Questions? Or have a suggestion for process improvement in your area?
Please contact your agency's Process Improvement Coordinator

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